

12. (Amended) An external composition as described in claim 9, wherein the amount of the pharmaceutical ingredient and/or the salt is 0.01-20 mass% of the total of the composition.

13. (Amended) An external composition as described in claim 8, which is a cosmetic composition.

14. (Amended) An external composition as described in claim 8, which is a hair dye.

Please add new claims 15 and 16 as follows:

15. A microgel as described in claim 2, wherein the hydrophilic compound capable of forming a gel is one or more hydrophilic compounds selected from the group consisting of agar, carrageenan, curdlan, gelatin, gellan gum, and alginic acid.

16. A microgel as described in claim 2, which has a viscosity of 2,000-1,000,000 mPa.s (B-type viscometer, 25°C).